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Contact: Darren Rogers
Senior Director, Communications & Media Services
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(502) 636-4461 (office)
(502) 345-1030 (mobile)
Darren.Rogers@KyDerby.com

SECRET MESSAGE EDGES LA SIGNARE IN OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP THRILLER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, May 30, 2020) – Secret Message edged **La Signare (FR)** by a head at the wire in a thrilling finish to Saturday's 44th running of the \$100,000 Old Forester Mint Julep (Grade III) at Churchill Downs. It was another neck back to **Zofelle (IRE)** in third with **She'sonthewarpath** another head back in fourth.

Juliet Foxtrot (GB), the 8-5 favorite in the full field of 14, contended for the lead with a furlong to run but finished sixth.

Secret Message, trained by **Graham Motion** and ridden by Hall of Famer **John Velazquez**, ran 1 1/16 miles on firm turf in 1:43.13.

"I was just sort of biding time there on the outside and she kept finding her stride down the lane and was able to get up late," Velazquez said.

Mitchell Road, who broke from the outside post 14, dictated the pace through early fractions of :23.20, :48.27 and 1:13.14 with Juliet Foxtrot (GB) a length behind and Zofelle (IRE) just behind her down along the inside hedge. Secret Message, in the clear on the outside, and La Signare (IRE) to her inside were positioned in eighth and ninth, respectively, down the backstretch.

Juliet Foxtrot, who made her first start in 181 days since a third-place finish in the Grade I Matriarch, drew even with Mitchell Road leaving the final turn and the two matched strides down the homestretch. Zofelle (IRE) poked her head in front at the sixteenth pole but Secret Message and La Signare (FR) were hitting their best strides late. The eventual winner raced in the clear down the middle of the track while the hard-luck runner-up had to briefly check behind the fading pacesetters in the final yards before finding room late between horses.

"Both horses ran such a huge race," said **Brendan Walsh**, trainer of both La Signare (FR) and Zofelle (IRE). "We ran second and third by a head. Those are really tough beats when you lose by that close of a margin but we are really proud of both of their efforts."

Secret Message returned \$53.40, \$21 and \$15.20 at odds of 25-1. La Signare (FR), under **Ricardo Santana Jr.**, paid \$22.60 and \$15.20. Zofelle (IRE), with **Corey Lanerie** up, paid \$7.80 to show.

She'sonthewarpath, who also made a bid down the lane under **Chantal Sutherland**, was fourth and was followed by **Altea (FR)**, Juliet Foxtrot (GB), Mitchell Road, **Nay Lady Nay (IRE)**, **Beau Recall (IRE)**, **Coco Channel**, **Varenka**, **Winning Envelope**, **Elizabeth Way (IRE)** and **Hanalei Moon**.

This was the fourth win for Secret Message, who previously won last year's Nassau (GII) and Dahlia and the 2018 Pucker Up (GIII). She was making her first start since a 10th place finish in the E.P. Taylor (GI) last October.

The \$56,420 first prize jumped Secret Message's earnings to \$416,838 with a record of 6-2-0 in 15 starts. She is owned by the partnership of **Madaket Stables LLC**, **Heider Family Stables LLC**, **ERJ Racing LLC**, **Elayne Stables** and **Steven Bouchey**.

Secret Message is a daughter of Hat Trick (JPN) out of the Gone West mare Westside Singer and was bred in Kentucky by **Allen Tennenbaum**.

BELL'S THE ONE RUNS DOWN BREAK EVEN IN WINNING COLORS

Bob Lothenbach's Bell's the One displayed a powerful late kick in the Churchill Downs stretch to run down speedy pacesetter **Break Even** and win Saturday's 17th running of the \$100,000 Winning Colors presented by Finlandia (Grade III) by three lengths. **Mia Mischief**, the 4-5 favorite, finished another 2 ½ lengths back in third.

Ridden by **Corey Lanerie** and trained by **Neil Pessin**, Bell's the One ran six furlongs over a fast track in a swift 1:08.70 to collect her fourth career stakes win. Last fall, the 4-year-old daughter of Majesticperfection won the \$250,000 Raven Run (GII) at Keeneland.

Break Even was the expected leader in the field of eight fillies and mares and she delivered while zipping through an opening quarter mile in :21.28 and the half in :44.51. Mia Mischief, the winner of last spring's Distaff (GI) at Churchill Downs, tracked close behind in second with Bell's the One unhurried in sixth. Bell's the One was roused for her best run at the head of the stretch, drew even with Break Even at the sixteenth pole and drew away with ease in the final stages.

"She is really talented," Lanerie said. "When she switches leads like that she has such a strong turn of foot and really finishes strong."

The victory was worth \$60,140, which pushed her career earnings to \$461,240 from a record of 6-2-0 in 12 starts.

Sent to post at odds of 13-1, Bell's the One paid \$28.20, \$9.80 and \$4.20. Break Even, the 2-1 second betting choice ridden by **Joel Rosario**, returned \$4.20 and \$3. Mia Mischief, under **Ricardo Santana Jr.**, paid \$2.10 to show.

Unique Factor, Sneaking Out, Spiced Perfection, Princess Causeway and **Take Charge Angel** completed the order of finish. **Lady Suebee** was scratched.

"When she has a target she'll really do what you want her to do," Pessin said. "Her workouts are the same way as she runs in the race. This filly never gets respect. This was a really good group of horses with two Grade I winners. She's always a big price and never gets the respect she deserves."

Bell's the One is out of the Street Cry (IRE) mare Street Mate and was bred in Kentucky by **Bret Jones**.

The Winning Colors is named in honor of **Eugene Klein's Winning Colors**, the most recent filly to have won the Kentucky Derby when she beat the boys in the 114th running of the Run for the Roses in 1988 for the Hall of Fame tandem of trainer **D. Wayne Lukas** and jockey **Gary Stevens**.

\$101,123 LATE PICK 5 CARRYOVER ON SUNDAY

Betting on Saturday's 11-race card at Churchill Downs totaled \$16,777,643. ... Racing beneath the Twin Spires will continue Sunday at 1 p.m. (all times Eastern) with a 10-race card. ... There are a trio of carryovers: a \$101,123 carryover in the 50-cent Late Pick 5 on Races 6-10; a \$149,234 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot on Races 5-10; and a \$7,599 carryover in the \$1 Super Hi-5 on the final race of the day. ... Racing from Churchill Downs on Sunday will air on **FS2** from 1-6 p.m. as part of FOX Sports' "America's Day at the Races" coverage. It also will be broadcast on **FOX Sports Ohio** from 3-6 p.m.

OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP QUOTES

John Velazquez, jockey of SECRET MESSAGE (winner): “I was just sort of biding time there on the outside and she kept finding her stride down the lane and was able to get up late.”

Brendan Walsh, trainer of LA SIGNARE (runner-up), ZOFELLE (third): “Both horses ran such a huge race. We ran second and third by a head. Those are really tough beats when you lose by that close of a margin but we are really proud of both of their efforts.”

Steve Margolis, trainer of SHE’S ON THE WARP PATH (fourth): “She didn’t have the best of trips at all in behind horses like that but still ran a huge effort. We were fourth by a length in a Grade III which could’ve been a Grade I with the type of horses that were in there.”

WINNING COLORS QUOTES

Corey Lanerie, jockey of BELL’S THE ONE (winner): “She is really talented. When she switches leads like that she has such a strong turn of foot and really finishes strong.”

Neil Pessin, trainer of BELL’S THE ONE (winner): “When she has a target she’ll really do what you want her to do. Her workouts are the same way as she runs in the race. This filly never gets respect. This was a really good group of horses with two Grade I winners. She’s always a big price and never gets the respect she deserves.”

Brad Cox, trainer of BREAK EVEN (runner-up): “She ran a really solid race. She fought hard to the wire but (Bell’s the One) just came rolling late to catch us.”

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